

Artistic Heritage in a Changing Pacific, edited by P J C Dark and R G Rose. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993. ISBN 0-8248-1573-4, viii + 261 pages, maps, color plates, photographs, figures, references. US\$39.

Participants in the Pacific Arts Association's Fourth International Symposium on the Arts of the Pacific set themselves a challenging theme, which also serves as the title, *Artistic Heritage in a Changing Pacific*. The strength of this volume is the sophistication some of the authors bring to issues critical to Pacific Islanders and artists: the interpenetrating spheres of contemporary artistic productions, and of cultural heritage as retained in both performance and material objects (often in overseas museums). The authors avoid easy dichotomies between authenticity and commodification, insiders and outsiders, invented traditions and alien intrusions. They attempt to come to grips with the complexities Pacific Islanders face as they tap resources imperfectly documenting disrupted histories and search for bridges between past and present.

This is not an easy task, particularly when a major emphasis of the symposium, hosted by the Honolulu Academy of Arts from 6 to 12 August 1989, was on the Role of the Museum in a Changing Pacific. The museum is highly contested in the Pacific—to what extent is it a western institution that has benefited from the colonial appropriation and collection of cultural treasures redefined as artifacts? To what extent are museums both in the islands and abroad not only repositories of signs from the past but impor-

tant research arenas? How may museums be redefined to allow Islanders to recover traditional knowledge and revitalize contemporary arts and their performance? The political tone of this inquiry was set by keynote speaker Dr Sidney Moko Mead, who called for the repatriation of the heirlooms held by metropolitan museums to their home societies. Those interested in a full report of the symposium and the Workshop on the Common Future of Cultural Institutions in the Pacific and the Pacific Arts Association, are directed to the association newsletter, *Pacific Arts* 1 and 2 (1990, 1-20).

This volume presents twenty-two of the fifty-five conference papers and presentations. The museum theme is continued in papers from the sections on "Visual Arts" and "The Future of Pacific Arts," lending coherence to a wide-ranging set of papers by museum professionals trained in anthropology and fine arts, art historians, archaeologists, and a folklorist, a historian, and a physical anthropologist. It is unfortunate that the section on "The Performing Arts" is so poorly represented in the volume, perhaps reflecting a continuing breach between the visual arts of a museum world, and the ways cultural treasures feature in social performances in their island societies. Too often documentation of the social lives of the treasures was lost during their collection, forcing a museum emphasis on form rather than context.

The editors' thought-provoking introduction sets the chapters in the framework of the symposium and the decade's major Pacific art exhibitions and performances. Dark and Rose also

briefly address the ways old forms and traditions interact with new media, forms, and contexts to produce new artistic heritages. The following two chapters on Lapita reflect the continued importance of analyses of the Lapita design system to archaeological studies of the spread and dispersal of Austronesian speakers into the Pacific. Spriggs demonstrates that apparently abstract designs characteristic of later pottery assemblages may link directly to earlier more naturalistic face designs, through a series of transformations and simplifications from double- and single-face designs. His chapter provides the important basis for further comparative studies of the Lapita design system and its relationship to contemporary arts of the region. Pietrusewsky analyzes data from (currently limited) skeletal assemblages associated with Lapita sites to test current hypotheses arguing between an island Southeast Asian origin and rapid spread through the southwest Pacific, as opposed to an indigenous development in the Bismarck Archipelago. Terrell challenges archaeologists to rethink previous preoccupations with the themes of progress, descent, and family tree histories that have made archaeology more a folk art than a science.

Van Tilburg presents the problems encountered in one of the Pacific's most highly documented and protected sites—Rapa Nui—when two statues reportedly suffered irreversible harm when silicone molds were made for an exhibition in a prestigious German museum. Despite the numerous agencies in place that reviewed and endorsed the proposal, apparent

changes in the statues' patina and color raised both scholarly and local outrage. Van Tilburg likens the passive role of the museum in this case to the ways museums in the past benefited from unmonitored collectors, and calls for a more aggressive role for local museums to supplement the work of a scholarly advisory committee in the creation of more stringent guidelines. Kaeppler, chair of one of the museum sections, challenges scholars to question the received wisdom of earlier "expert" attributions, noting that the misidentification of the woods from which Hawaiian images were carved is not a trivial issue, because raw materials are used metaphorically, and certain ceremonies were named for woods.

The correct identification of the substance of the images, and reanalyses of their contexts of collection, could help reconstruct their ritual significance. Similarly, Ivory invites a review of Marquesan art, moving beyond issues of technology and function to the interactions between collectors and artists. Morris, Waite, and Rose demonstrate the importance of ongoing research with existing collections, challenging incomplete received notions of source materials, and the range of information on the artistic and cultural systems not yet tapped by studies that emphasized formal classifications. Such studies could bridge indigenous concerns with the trajectories of ritual objects through time, including their pre-museum and museum histories in the entangled meaning systems of their various stewards. Seaver, Stevenson, and Jones provide thoughtful analyses of contem-

porary artists' syncretic renewal of historical images and icons in today's living traditions, incorporating new media and producing arts for new contexts.

The remaining chapters are noteworthy for the ways they stretch existing analyses and emphasize the ways contemporary artists may signal multiple messages to disparate audiences. Enright provides a provocative insight into the transformation of Pacific artistic systems through his isolation of changing conceptualizations of time as a primary agent of the erosion of vernacular craft processes in American Samoa. Smidt and McGuigan document the ways the owners of Abelam sculptures and paintings prepared them for an initiation ceremony in 1984, later used the scenes as a tourist attraction, and, when it was time to clear the house for future ceremonies, offered the collection to overseas museums. Eschewing a simplified commodification analysis, the authors argue that the Abelam owners had already obtained cultural satisfaction by the correct indigenous use of the scenes, believed that the more ephemeral and sacred parts of the ceremony were not transferred, and chose to increase Abelam artistic prestige throughout the world, in addition to accruing considerable monetary wealth. Similarly, Anderson argues that contemporary Warlpiri successfully engage in a world art market while protecting the sacred meanings of their representations. In the process they earn income from their own traditions and reinforce the value of the knowledge of the elders among youth who can only enter into painting

through ceremonial training. An external aim is the hope that international recognition of Aboriginal artists will help break down Australian prejudices. Faulstich continues this analysis with an in-depth analysis of the ways contemporary Warlpiri paintings connect landscape, self, and art, actively linking the spiritual and temporal worlds.

Megaw and Megaw raise important issues concerning the sale of Aboriginal arts, querying whether their incorporation among western "High Arts" is simply a later form of colonization according to western categories, not just the Aboriginal conquest of western mentalities. Simons then explores the radical arts of Papua New Guinean and Australian Aboriginal artists working outside nontraditional media and contexts, and the relationships of these new productions to the creation of national character. She suggests that Aboriginal artists use both Aboriginal and white Australian cultural systems to send complex messages, and that theories of abrogation fail to credit Aboriginal creativity.

Lindstrom and White's analyses of "singing histories" of World War II is the sole paper from the Performance section. Their rich, multi-textual analyses demonstrate the ways songs not only authenticate the past but are used to maintain contemporary rights and identity. Lewis also addresses issues of performance in his thought piece on the future of New Ireland art: as the frequency of ceremonial occasions decreased, the training of carvers was interrupted, and western practices alienated Islanders' time (echoing Enright), resulting in a decline in the

practice of carving. Lewis looks to museums as one possible source of artistic revitalization, drawing on Northwest Coast examples.

Dark and Mead approach overviews from opposite perspectives: Dark from that of style throughout the Pacific, Mead from one tradition—that of the Māori. Mead argues that the continued importance of the arts lies in their holding firm a cultural heritage under threat from a variety of forces. Dark suggests that emphasis on the preservative functions of art derive from western perceptions of the “work of art” as being something precious that may be used to authenticate tradition. He argues for an appreciation of the active role of art to comment on and give meaning to the social present. His closing query, whether current Pacific emphases on the role of the arts in cultural preservation are not anomalous, deserves further consideration.

There are some minor complaints: a list of the color plates, at least, would be helpful, and the index referred to in the Cataloging-in-Publication Data does not exist. Otherwise, the publication details, and the incorporation of a wealth of photographs, drawings, and maps in the figures, are exemplary. One would hope for more extensive coverage of the Pacific in future Pacific Arts Association volumes and for continued support of indigenous artists and analysts and their progression from presentations to publications.

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Paradise: Portraying the New Guinea Highlands, by Michael O'Hanlon.

London: British Museum Press, 1993. ISBN 0-7141-2509-1, 96 pages, figures, maps, plates, notes, bibliography, index. Paper, £10.95.

Today, when much of the scholarly writing about museums and their exhibitions leans toward wholesale criticism, O'Hanlon's book offers a refreshing alternative. It is substantive, insightful, and unpretentious, and, through its complex narrative, calmly and convincingly challenges much of the judgment others have offered.

O'Hanlon is guided by his belief that in our efforts to rectify earlier failings we must not impose a new subjugation by ignoring local agency (13). As a result, his writing is rich in the exploration of local agency and perceptions.

Paradise, written to accompany an exhibit of the same title at the Museum of Mankind in London, is much more than an ordinary exhibition catalogue. Its main purpose is to record the process of collecting the artifacts and fabricating the exhibition, as well as to document the items in local context. O'Hanlon, who conducted fieldwork in the Wahgi area of the New Guinea Highlands in the late 1970s and early 1980s, returned in 1986 and 1990 specifically to collect for the Museum of Mankind, where he is also an assistant keeper. Thus, the book interweaves the experiences and perspectives of field ethnographer, collector, and curator as it explores local agency and perceptions.

The catalogue feels elegantly slim, especially given the weight of its substance. It consists of just three chap-